[ARCHERS]

[P. 177-C]

the frequent moving of camp. According to Schebesta (1952, 80), the hut and the space in front are kept clean.

In leisure hours there are games and pastimes in which children and adults may take part, the dance being the most important. Schebesta (1952, 189 ff.) also mentions rope skipping; tug-of-war (often between men and women); *paliengbe*, an organized battle between men and women for a regime of plantains; and a form of gambling known as *mali*. The women and children have various string games as well.

The dance takes place on every possible occasion and is accompanied by drums made by the villagers. The emphasis in archer music (Schebesta, 1952, 190) is, as in the dance, on rhythm. Schebesta cites a number of musical instruments that are used by the archers for recreation, notably the drum, the musical bow, the sanza, the zither, and the *ruma* pipes.

Legend telling and mime are other important means of recreation mentioned by Schebesta (1952, 195). These, like most other recreational activities of adults, take place in the evening around the campfire. It is here, in any case, that the bachelors usually sleep (although Schebesta mentions the fact that there are bands in which bachelor huts are built), as do such of the married men as are under sexual taboo.

[ARCHERS]

[P 188-C]

obscene gesture to one of the men, returning to her place as the man follows her and makes a similar gesture. 535 183

Mimetic dances usually concern the hunt, says Schebesta.

Drama, chiefly in the form of mime, is sometimes associated with dance and sometimes separate. Schebesta mentions its importance and the ability of the Mbuti in this art, but gives no details. 536 •

From the material available it is impossible to gauge even the exact nature of these art forms among the Efe archers, let alone their functions in archer society, apart from their obvious recreational role, which seems to have been the only function assigned to them by Schebesta. 53

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Early sources offer only contradiction and confusion concerning the magico-religious system of the Mbuti. A few affirm that the Mbuti are ridden with superstition, but most report that they are without superstition and even without religion. 774 114

1: Turnbull E-4, 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

Mrs. Putnam mentions a villager chief who called in a Pygmy "doctor" who made an incision in the chief's knee from which he withdrew antelope bones and some bugs. Putnam (1948, 340), as does Schebesta (1941, 236), mentions Pygmies' going to villager doctors for treatment of ailments for which the Pygmies have no remedy. This is the only instance quoted of the reverse process, and the only mention of any Pygmy specialist. No further details are known as to how and where the Pygmy acquired his art and reputation.

The villagers recognize the Mbuti knowledge of forest lore. There is one incident known among the net hunters of Pygmies' being called to treat a village girl bitten by a Gaboon viper. The venom of this snake is both hemotoxic and neurotoxic and is normally fatal. The girl was bitten in the face, which was swollen like a balloon by the time she was treated. She was cured quickly and completely. Details of the snake-bite antidotes of these Mbuti are not known.

Rationalization

As in the parallel section for the archers, speculation on problems of life and death are considered under Religious Life (p. 235). A word of warning, however, should be offered. Mimicry is a widely attested Mbuti practice. Their great ability in the art is equally well confirmed on all sides. They are equally able to imitate speech as well as action and, with true

[P 232-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[p. 233-A]

artistic flair, even enter into the thought processes of their subjects. They answer questions in precisely the way they want to answer them, without necessarily any regard for the truth. They will give a villager the answers that they think he wants, and similarly with the European. Even among themselves Pygmies may appear to be conducting a serious discussion in their own terms, but one or another will, in fact, be talking, consciously or unconsciously, as a villager or a European might talk. Single or even several instances of what individual Mbuti say therefore must be taken only with extreme caution merely as general indications of what they really mean, particularly when they are replying to questions. While we may be able to talk with some certainty about "rationalization among the Mbuti," we do not have nearly enough evidence to talk about "Mbuti rationalization."[1]

Putnam, despite his long sojourn among the Mbuti of the Ituri, was always extremely cautious concerning questions of origin and was very alert to the difficulty presented by the Mbuti mastery of imitation. The problem, as he saw it, was concerned not in the least

1:/Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P 235-C]

latter little is known in detail. Song is sometimes used when legends are told and is frequently mentioned in them. Dance and mime are even more closely connected. 53

The subject matter of Mbuti drama seems to correspond, as might be expected, with our classification of the subject matter of legends, but the former places greater emphasis on events of the day, particularly hunting. In default of detailed and accurate accounts of dramatic art and all attendant circumstances, the only generalization that seems permissible is the evident lack of interest in personal problems and a preoccupation with the maintenance of the relative status of the human (Mbuti), animal (villager), and supernatural worlds. 536 • [81]

With reference to specialists in song and dance, as with other art forms, some individuals who have greater skill than others achieve a measure of renown for their skill. A mediocre hunter who is a good singer or dancer or legend teller is a far more important person than a moderate hunter who is none of these things. 555 53

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

wooden clappers used only for the accompaniment of honey songs, and started clapping them vigorously while singing. Masisi found the competition too strong, shrugged his shoulders, chased the women away and, taking a pair of *ngbengbe* himself, joined in the singing.

The next day the men and the older youths went honey gathering and brought back enough honey to send some as a gift to Cephu.

7. Laziness is highly criticized among the Mbuti, and is always related to hunger. It is one of the few qualities (noisy hunting is another, "blindness" in the honey season a third) that is countered by public assertion, in mime, dance and song, of the opposite value. One morning, shortly after dawn, there were murmurings of discontent because of the dampness of the forest, and suggestions that there was enough food in camp to allow for a day without hunting. One of the older hunter's wives stalked out into the center of the camp and began an elaborate wordless mime, showing that she was not going to be lazy and stay behind and play and dance "empty" games and dances. She was going to take her husband's spear and go off and hunt (she reenacted a successful hunt) and return with lots of food and share it all around and make her *roho* good and make the forest happy. Then when *she* sang and danced, it would not be empty.

It was a good show, and the whole camp looked on and laughed, then went hunting.

8. One morning, at the beginning of the honey season, a number of hunters set out, as usual, at scattered intervals. Several seemed to be staying behind, so I also remained. After about half an hour the hunters returned, one by one throwing their nets on the ground in the center of the camp. When they were all back, a bachelor youth who had gone with them began a tirade against the hunters who had stayed behind. Hearing his voice, and wondering why he was taking such a prominent part in a hunting issue, women began sleepily coming out of their huts. It was evident that too many had decided to stay home, and the hunt had not had enough beaters. The youth, Pepei, not only criticized the women as lazy animals for not coming on the hunt but also criticized the rest of the hunters, pointing out they had been even too lazy to send their sons with their nets, and had left people like himself, an orphaned youth, to do the work of men.

The hunters had nothing to say, but the women responded vigorously that they were not going to carry nets and spears for the men, they had work of their own to do, and that if enough youths had

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

765 was neither. Everyone ate his fill as and when he pleased, a couple of
264 the older men saying they would wait until the youngsters had finished before they ate. But they did not wait for long. I was told, however, that everyone *had* to eat, just as no adult male was allowed to sleep but *had* to sing while molimo singing was in progress. Ap-
765 parently one of the greatest crimes that a Pygmy male can commit,
288 if not the greatest, is to be found asleep when the molimo is singing.
[536] One of the men stood up, and miming as all Pygmies love to do, he showed how they used to search for sleeping men, a spear under each arm, and how if they found one they would spear him in the stomach and kill him completely and for ever. I was told that then his body would be buried under the kumamolimo and nobody would be allowed to mention his death, even to remark on his absence. The
[825] women would be told that the molimo itself, the great animal of the forest, had carried off one of their number, but like the men they would ask no questions and would never again mention the missing man.

765 The molimo was often referred to as "the animal of the forest,"
825 and the women were supposed to believe that it really was an animal,
534 and that to see it would bring death. That of course is why they
562 were all bundled off to bed with the children before the trumpet was ever brought into camp. And even when it *was* brought in it was often shielded by a number of youths so that if any woman should happen to look, she would see nothing. The animal sounds it produced were certainly realistic, but I wondered what the women thought when it sang. What kind of animal was it that one moment could make such threatening sounds, and the next instant sing more beautifully than anything else in the whole forest?

765 I remembered again Ausu's saying that the only important thing
533 about the trumpet was the fact that it had a good voice and could
539 sing well. I was reminded of the Pygmy legend of the Bird with the
825 Most Beautiful Song. This bird was found by a young boy who

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

765 growled and bellowed, and it rampaged around the camp, overturn-
282 ing any of the crude chairs that had been left outside, scattering the
534 remains of fires in all directions, and beating on the roofs of huts to
533 wake everyone up. Sometimes the youths seemed to divide at random into two sides and have a sort of tug of war with the trumpet, some trying to lead it in one direction, some in the other. It was not a real contest of strength, only acting. I wondered if perhaps this represented the original struggle for possession of the molimo, a struggle which some say was between Pygmies and animals, or others say was between men and women.

765 Ekianga took a prominent part in these morning affrays. He used
688 to lead the youths, always holding two spears, one under each arm,
• 536 pointing down at the ground as though he were looking for any sleeping person who should have been taking part in the activity. Sometimes he acted it out, stopping as though he saw an offender. Then he danced about and finally jabbed the spear blades at the earth.

765 I said to Kenge that this was what would happen to him if he
688 went off and took my bed and blanket again before the evening
183 singing had finished. Kenge laughed loudly and shouted across the
115 camp what I had said. But then he became serious and said that he
123 had been singing all the time until Moke had first said he wanted to go to sleep. "When the old men want to sleep it is all right for us to sleep," he said. Then he added laconically, "And of course if we are tired it is all right for us to go to sleep, naturally." He thought the conversation not very interesting, so he gave an animal call and ran with great leaps and bounds, like the antelope he was named for, across the camp to join in the tug of war.

765 If anyone had given offense the previous day, usually by being
578 too argumentative, the youths in the morning rampage paid particular attention to the offender's hut. Cephu's camp of course came in for the most attention, and although Cephu complained loudly

had not left with the hunt but had gone off on his own, as he usually did, with his bow and arrows. I was surprised to see him. He said, "Don't follow them any longer; they will deafen you with their noise. Cephu will spoil the hunt completely—you'll see." He added that he had happened to be nearby, waiting for the animals either to break through the nets or to escape around the edges. He picked up a large civet cat, the skin slightly stained where it had been pierced by an arrow. "Not very good for eating," Moke commented, "but it will make a beautiful hat. Cephu won't get even that—he is too busy watching other people's nets to watch his own. His is a good net to stand behind with bow and arrow!" He chuckled to himself and swung the cat high in the air.

We ambled back slowly, Moke talking away, sometimes to himself and sometimes to me. On the way he stopped to examine some tracks that were fresh, appearing over the tracks made by the hunters earlier on. He announced that they were made by a large male leopard, and that it was probably watching us from "over there"—waving casually to our right with his bow. Then he moved on in his leisurely way, humming to himself.

Back in the camp I was surprised to find that some of the hunters were back already, including Maipe. They had taken a short cut, and traveled twice as fast as Moke and myself. Some of them said it was because rain had threatened, but others, more bluntly, said it was because they did not like the noise Cephu was making. There were a number of women in the camp, and they seemed anxious to change the subject, so Moke told them about the leopard tracks. They laughed and said what a shock the hunters might get if they came back along that trail. One of them started miming the leopard lying in wait, its eyes staring from that side to this. The others formed a line and pretended to be the hunters. Every few steps the "leopard" turned around and jumped up in the air, growling fiercely, sending its pursuers flying to the protection of the trees.

his head he stalked back to the main camp shouting at the top of his voice what miserable wretches his brother and his sister-in-law were. The dirty old pipe was damning evidence, and all sympathy was with Masalito. Njobo's wife took her husband's pipestem and gave it to Masalito, who quickly regained his good humor. But by now Aberi was aroused, and came storming into the camp, saying that his brother had insulted Tamasa. He declared that it was a matter for serious action; Masalito should be thrashed.

Everybody thought this was a great joke, and burst into laughter Only children and youths get thrashed, and Masalito was a father. Aberi did not like being laughed at and he went over to where Masalito was sitting down on a log, smoking his new pipe. He demanded an apology. Masalito, now completely composed, simply picked up the old pipestem and threw it at his brother's feet, saying, "There! That is for her!" By now a crowd had gathered around, and the hotter Aberi became the more relaxed Masalito seemed to be.

Aberi shook his fists and said that if nobody else was going to thrash Masalito he was. This brought more laughs as Aberi was positively puny beside Masalito, who himself was little more than four feet tall. Masalito invited his brother to come and try. Aberi then pretended that he was holding a spear, and in a high-pitched voice, squeaking with anger, he cried out, "I am going to get my spear and I am going to kill you completely!" Whereupon he imitated a spear thrust in Masalito's direction. There was a gasp of horror, as this is something one does not say to one's brother even in jest. But Masalito replied calmly, "Go and get your spear, then, and come back and kill me. I'll still be here. You don't have the courage to kill your brother." He said a lot of other things, goading Aberi on to an even higher pitch of fury. Aberi tried to make himself more impressive by a graphic dance, which was meant to show exactly how he was going to leap in the air and twist around and drive the spear home. But he

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

593
578
152 was not a good dancer, and when he tried to illustrate the leap he fell flat on his face.

• [536] That was the end of the matter for Aberi. For weeks he was ridiculed, everyone asking him if he had lost his spear, or telling him to be careful not to trip and fall. But it was not quite the end of the matter for Masalito. He felt more angry than ever at his brother, because Aberi had made himself, and so the whole family, an object of ridicule. Masalito felt this an added insult to himself. Even Kelemoke was furious. So relations between the two brothers got worse and worse, and every time there was a silence in the camp Masalito would complain in a loud voice about his brother and his brother's wife.

593
578
152
621
626
689 At first this was tolerated, but finally it threatened to split the camp in two. Masalito began naming all his friends and relatives to support him in ignoring Aberi; he refused to say a word to his brother. Of course his brother could claim support from the same relatives and friends, and tension was spreading throughout both camps. That was when the molimo stepped in and showed public disapproval of Masalito. The original source of the dispute, and Aberi's undoubted wrongdoing, were forgotten. Masalito was guilty of the much more serious crime of splitting the hunting band into opposing factions. He himself was then ridiculed and shamed into silence. After that it was only one or two days before the two brothers became good friends and hunting companions once again.

578
626
516
836 Disputes were generally settled with little reference to the alleged rights and wrongs of the case, but chiefly with the intention of restoring peace to the community. One night Kenge slipped out of our hut on an amorous expedition to the hut of Manyalibo, who had an attractive daughter, one of Kenge's many admirers. Shortly afterward there was a howl of rage and Kenge came flying back across the
[152]

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

spirit-animal and he was going to attack you so I drove him into the hole and I dare not leave it or he will come out and kill you! Run and get your spear and save me, your poor Pygmy!" The villager was scared out of his wits and ran away. Asofalinda promptly hid the plantains elsewhere and quickly returned to the hole.

At this point in the story, Masamba, Njobo's wife, came to help act out the rest. Asofalinda crouched at the foot of a tree, pretending that she was covering a hole in the ground, and Masamba, acting the part of the villager, crept onto the scene, carrying a spear and looking very frightened. As they acted the scene, the villager came up behind Asofalinda and asked timidly if the spirit-animal was still there. "Yes," said Asofalinda, over her shoulder. "But I have used my magic and sung it to sleep so that you will be able to kill it. But you must be very quiet and very careful. You are the only one who could do it, you are so big and strong and clever, not like we poor Pygmies."

Saying this, she slowly uncovered the hole and whispered to the villager to stoop down and peer in. Masamba then cautiously bent over and peered into the imaginary hole. "No," said Asofalinda, "you will have to look deeper. It is a big hole and the spirit-animal is right at the back. But you must be very quiet or it will wake up and kill you first." So Masamba stooped lower and Asofalinda finished the scene with no further commentary. It was hardly necessary. She crept behind Masamba and kicked her heartily in the backside and ran off laughing and clapping her hands with mirth. Even Masamba, who suffered the brunt of the joke, enjoyed it so much that the two of them re-enacted it four times that one afternoon.

In ways like this, even on a rainy day when there is no hunting or gathering to be done, a camp can be made lively and entertaining. But generally rain brings depression. People sit in their huts and peer out miserably. On the whole, however, the tenor of life is even, wet